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Salgótarján–Baglyas-kő: A multi-period prehistoric site and medieval castle

Tünde Horváth, Attila Botond Szilasi

Abstract: Located in north-eastern Hungary, the site occupied during several periods features a medieval castle and a multi-period prehistoric settlement with a tell-like layer sequence of several meters. Similar stratified hilltop settlements, sometimes protected with some type of defences, have hitherto usually been assigned to the Baden culture. However, most of these sites are known exclusively from old excavations or finds collected during field surveys. The investigation of the Baglyas-kő site was undertaken with the goal of clarifying the spatial occupation strategies employed by different cultures during successive periods in a location that was eminently suited to constructing strongholds and of determining the periods during which the site was occupied, alongside the identification of possible correlations between the finds and various archaeological features. As it turned out, the site was not solely occupied during the Baden period in prehistory.

Keywords: mountain zone; limited occupation space; natural and artificial erosion; spatial organisation; multi-period; layer formation.

Introduction

In spring 2019, the Dornyay Béla Museum of Salgótarján received the opportunity to investigate a since long known and registered, but never systematically explored site as part of a research project funded by an international grant¹. Located on the north-western outskirts of Salgótarján, the Baglyas-kő site, known for its stronghold dating from the Árpáadian Age, is mentioned several times in the archaeological literature (Fig. 1/1). However, a systematic study of its mentions in medieval charters and other written records is still lacking, and neither has the stronghold been archaeologically investigated (an overview of previous research of the stronghold, without any pretence at completeness: historical description of the monument²; survey and description with an overview of the written sources³. The medieval finds of the excavation will be assessed by Balázs Tóth.⁴

Baglyas-kő is listed among the sites of the Late Copper Age Baden culture and the Early Bronze Age Makó culture⁵. During the past decades, several prehistoric stray finds that could be identified as pottery sherds of the Baden period and the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age reached the archaeological collection of the county museum (Szécsény, Kubinyi Ferenc Museum, inv. nos 51.56–60, 55.29.1–9, 56.6–9, 56.21–22, 56.44, 56.87). Thus, even before we began the excavation, we practically took it for granted that in addition to the medieval occupation, we would stand a good chance of encountering prehistoric, in all likelihood of Late Copper Age and Bronze Age settlement layers, whose investigation would also be one of our tasks.

During the past few years, we have undertaken the critical re-assessment of the sites of the Ózd–Piliny group of the Late Copper Age Baden complex, one of which – Salgótarján–Pécs-kő – lies some

¹ The investigation of the site was undertaken as part of the INTERREG V project (within the framework of the Slovakian-Hungarian Collaborative Project, Grant SKHU/1601/1.1/267, Living Heritage–Presentation of the cultural heritage transcending borders and ages in historic County Nógrád). The archaeological site is registered under No. 32101 in the register of archaeological sites, its cadastre number is 1374–1387. The excavation was conducted between March 25 and April 16, 2019, in collaboration with ArchaeoJedi Kft., in the Baglyaskő Castle Nature Reserve Visitor Centre (Bükk National Park). Excavation permit no.: NO-05/EOVO/135–5/2019. It must here be mentioned that in 2010, Szilvia Guba of the Kubinyi Ferenc Museum in Szécsény conducted a trial excavation at the time the Visitor Centre was built and found a medieval occupation level in the area of the current building.

² Mocsáry 1826, 240; Genthon 1954, 358–359.

³ Cs. Sebestyén 2010; Simon 1988, 117–118; Nováki, Sándorfi 1991, 264–265; Simon 1988, 117–118; Feld 2015, 131–132; Nováki *et al.* 2017, 66–67.

⁴ About the medieval part of the excavation a preliminary report in Hungarian: Horváth *et al.* 2020.

⁵ Dornyay 1926, 5; Kalicz 1968, 79, Site 29, 31, Taf. III.6–11, 13–14.

3.5 km as the crow flies on the city's north-eastern outskirts. One truly surprising result of the critical re-assessment of this site and its finds was that the iconic Late Copper Age sites of north-eastern Hungary were not "pure" Baden sites as earlier believed. As a matter of fact, the previously misidentified finds, among them pottery of the Makó, Hatvan, Piliny, Tumulus and Kyjatice cultures, accounted for a much larger portion of the find material, including the assemblage from Pécs-kő, than the finds of the Baden culture. At the same time, it also became clear that an intense Middle Copper Age horizon could be noted on these sites, indicating that their occupation had begun before the Late Copper Age. One major insight provided by the critical re-assessment was that the Ózd–Piliny group should be regarded as the upland variant of the Viss group rather than as an independent group of the Baden complex and that the label "Salgótarján group" should be discarded⁶.

In the light of the above, we regarded the investigation of the Baglyas-kő site, located in a highly similar natural and cultural environment as Pécs-kő, as an immense opportunity, even more so since we would undertake the research excavation of the site and would not have to take the find material of earlier excavations as our starting point.

In addition to the archaeological excavation, we could also employ various other methods that would enable the identification of subsurface or above-ground, but perished and no longer visible defence works and other features, even before opening the excavation trenches, and would be of aid in positioning our trenches in locations where we could expect features deemed suitable for excavation.

Geographic description

The Baglyas-kő site is located in the Medves micro-region (formerly known as the Litke-Etesi Hills micro-region), part of the northern Hungarian basin meso-region in the Northern Mountain Range. Rising to a height of 301 m a.s.l, the Baglyas-kő is a stratovolcano overlooking the confluence of the Dobroda and Ménes Streams beside the saddle of the Dobroda Valley (Fig. 1/4–5). The Baglyas-kő is a smaller, dyke-like pass among the small basalt cones of the Karancs Hills, which, unlike the volcanic cones of the Nógrád region, lies not on a mountain, but on one of the low hills on the eastern margin of the hill range. The hill region itself is made up of *ca.* 22–25-million-year-old sedimentary rocks, principally schlier and sandstone. The soft sedimentary rocks were eroded during the millennia, while the double basalt outcrop remained. The geological structure of the currently visible double basalt chimney is fairly well-known owing to the coal mining activities conducted at a distance of 200–250 m from and underneath it. The steep volcanic cone is made up of basalt tuff and, to a lesser extent, of basalt⁷. Baglyas-kő was part of the Etes Trench, where only the lower coal deposit (Deposit III), which evolved some 18–19 million years ago, was pierced by the volcano's lava tube 3.5–3.8 million years ago, with natural coke forming at the interface of the two. The basalt outcrop visible today is the denuded part of the volcanic tube connecting the magma chamber of a smaller volcano with the surface. The cable-car used for coal mining descended to a depth of 150 m in it: when this shaft was cut, it became apparent that the fill of the magma channel was not vertical, but had an angle of 75°. In the last phase of the volcano's activity, magma again filled a 1–3 m wide crevice, creating a basalt vein that was quarried during the brief period of basalt quarrying. Thus, the currently visible double rock is the result of human activity⁸.

From the late 1800s, industrial coal mining began in the area: the deepest, most intensely mined shaft yielding the highest amount of coal, the Károly Shaft (1889–1914, 200 m deep) extends beside and under the Baglyas-kő, while the József Shaft (mined from 1879) lies in its close proximity. Both were shut down by the 1930s. The extremely deep Károly Shaft was backfilled and compacted and its exact location is no longer known (Fig. 1/2). A slag spoil-heap and a significant amount of industrial waste made up of diverse elements extends across the area and into the area of the stronghold⁹.

The broader area of the Baglyas-kő volcanic basalt outcrop is currently part of a nature reserve. The rehabilitation of the Baglyas-kő and its immediate area was begun in the early 2000s: it now has a

⁶ Horváth 2018, Part 2.

⁷ Jugovics 1968, 163.

⁸ Judik 2013, 4–16.

⁹ Dzsida 1944, 64; Szvircek 2000, 27, 440.

visitor centre, which is maintained and enlarged according to the changing needs, and is administered by the Bükk National Park since 1993¹⁰.

Brief description of the site

The core of the stronghold dating from the Árpadian Age, the irregularly shaped basalt outcrop with steep sides (except on the northern side), rises some 10 m above the surrounding land. There are two strongly eroded basalt “towers” on the southern side, between which a roughly 5×3 m large area with vertical walls hewn into the rock indicates the location of a former structure (perhaps a multi-storied keep)¹¹. Two horizontal recesses interpreted as beam pockets are an indication of the one-time roofing. There appears to have been an artificial opening towards the north, perhaps leading into a courtyard. A largely infilled ditch section on the more gently sloping north-eastern side marks the boundary of the castle’s core area, which covered a roughly 50×30 m large area. It is possible that there was a bailey beyond the ditch, although no visible traces have survived of it (Fig. 2/1).

Some historians identify this stronghold with an unnamed castle, mentioned in 1268, owned by Péter of the Illés branch of the Kácsik or Kacsics kindred, one of the region’s most important land-owners during the Árpadian Age. In 1265, the stronghold was defended by the castle soldiers Pouka and Barnabás, sons of Sudurman, against the troops of King Béla IV. Following Péter’s death, his sons sided with Máté Csák, the county’s mighty lord, placing their strongholds at his disposal, an act of defiance that was punished by Charles Robert, who confiscated the castle and gave it to his loyal follower, Tamás Szécsényi of the Falkos branch of the kindred. In 1327, the castle is described as abandoned stronghold; its estates were later part of the land of Somoskő Castle. The stronghold does not appear in the later written records. The surviving population settled in a safer, more protected valley on the other side of the ridge above Baglyas (at Baglyas-alja, Fig. 1/4¹²).

Baglyas-kő represents one of the earliest medieval private castles in County Nógrád and is therefore a prominent scheduled monument and archaeological site.

Non-invasive analytical methods preceding the excavation

The private stronghold erected beside the one-time medieval royal road has completely crumbled by now: its walls, still extant in the 1800s on the testimony of various illustrations, were destroyed by the local population and industrial mining activities during the past two hundred years (Fig. 1/1–2). The stony inner area with the natural double basalt column is covered with trees and shrubs and is rather steep; moreover, the original walls of the medieval castle hewn into the basalt rock lie in a protected nature reserve. Our investigation focused on preparing a survey of the walls of the one-time keep (a vector graphic digital surface model at a resolution of 5 cm was made of the stronghold and its broader area by means of a photogrammetric survey and orthophotos: Fig. 2/2–3).

The stronghold’s north-eastern, terraced foreground, currently covered with grass, was suitable for excavation. We first conducted a metal detecting survey across the gently sloping area and the steps leading to the castle, during which we recovered over forty archaeological artefacts. Their preliminary assessment suggested that in addition to the Árpadian Age occupation indicated by the known written sources, the stronghold was also occupied during later ages (the Hussite and the Ottoman period). It was our hope that in addition to these surface finds, the finds and features we would uncover during the excavation would shed more light on these periods.

We also conducted a ground-penetrating radar survey and manual corings in the castle’s north-eastern area in order to identify possible defensive ditches: these investigations revealed a double line

¹⁰ Judik 2013, 1–3.

¹¹ The interpretation of the features associated with the castle such as the beam pockets is not conclusive since they could equally well have been made at the time of basalt quarrying in the 1900s or during later coal mining, or by the population settling here during these periods. It is clear from the nineteenth-century cadastral maps that the quarry workers and their families settling in the area of the quarry received plots of land and the period’s written sources also confirm this (cf. Szvirček 2000, 442): the strip plots cultivated by the population were lay in the area under the castle: <https://mapire.eu/hu/map/cadastral/?layers=3%2C4&bbox=2201764.4196045203%2C6124286.385936334%2C2204781.293564651%2C6125241.848789898>. These plots can still be seen on the photos made between 1910 and 1930 (Fig. 1/1–3).

¹² Judik 2013, 28–33; Szvirček 2000, 363.

of ditched fortifications. We opened trenches in these areas across an 80 m²-large area, which wholly confirmed the one-time presence of medieval defence works.

Description of the excavation¹³

Based on the results of the preliminary non-invasive surveys, we opened excavation trenches in four locations. Trench 1 in the immediate foreground of the castle was opened to investigate the inner defence ditch, Trench 2 to its east for the investigation of the upper terrace, Trench 3 for investigating the second, outer defence ditch (Fig. 3) and Trench 4 for investigating the wide terrace in the castle's hill base area. The finds and features uncovered in Trenches 1 and 2 will not be discussed here because they can be predominantly dated to the medieval period. In contrast, a wealth of prehistoric finds and features were excavated alongside the medieval ones in Trenches 3 and 4, which shall be described and discussed below.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3, measuring 2×9 m, was opened in the area where the geophysical survey indicated the line of the wide medieval outer defence ditch. Following the removal of the upper humus layer, we found a wide medieval ditch with several fill layers in the middle and the south-eastern part of the trench (Obj. 8, SE-20, 22/21 IF). After the removal of the upper layers – which yielded high amounts of basalt rubble and prehistoric and medieval pottery – we found a slumped fill layer above the ditch's floor (SE-34). The layer containing mainly fourteenth–fifteenth-century pottery lay immediately by the ditch's interface.

In contrast, we uncovered various prehistoric features immediately underneath the humus in the trench's north-western part, nearer to the castle: Pits 7 (SE 18, 62–64/19 IF) and 11 (SE 31, 33/32 IF), and post-holes 5 (14/15 IF), 6 (16/17 IF), 9 (27/28 IF) and 11 (29/30 IF). The finds from the upper layers could be predominantly assigned to the Hatvan culture, while the material from the lower layers to the Baden culture. Even in cases when there was no apparent break between the layers, a similar distribution could be noted between the upper and lower part of the fill (e.g. Obj. 6, SE-16; Obj. 7, SE-62; Obj. 11, SE-33). Moving inward and slightly lower, the interface of the medieval ditch cut through the prehistoric layer containing small amounts of rubble that dated from the Hatvan period (SE-23: levelling or occupation level).

We documented three prehistoric burnt platforms at this depth (SE-24–25–26). The first (SE-24) was a red-burnt, 10–14 cm thick platform cut into Layer SE-23 and had a dished form (the cut registered as SE-36 IF). The second (SE-25) was a red-burnt, 8–10 cm thick platform barely plastered on top of Layer SE-23. The third (SE-26) lay by the eastern trench wall: a debris of burnt daub mixed with humus and grey earth, underneath which lay a burnt, greyish-red platform (SE-35). Of the three burnt platforms, SE-25 was the most poorly made: this one lay highest and was therefore damaged to the greatest extent, and in any case, it was a poorly-burnt clay platform, perhaps used only once. Platform SE-26 was a sturdier and more permanent structure: the greyish-red, strongly burnt, 3–4 cm thick platform (SE-35) lay underneath the debris of an open-air hearth or the walls of an above-ground oven, and a second greyish-red, 4–6 cm thick platform (SE-37) was found underneath it, which had a foundation of pottery sherds whose function was heat retention (SE-38). The lower part of this pottery sherd packing, mixed with ashy, greyish earth with charcoal as well as pottery, lay in a 10–16 cm deep pit (SE-41 IF), interpreted as the bedding pit of the oven.

The above-described features were part of a Hatvan settlement on a higher-lying terrace, the associated features of a smaller settlement section that had perhaps lain beside a smaller workshop or had been part of the cooking/baking installations of a house. We found that the lower fill layers of some features contained Baden finds. It would appear that similarly to the builders of the medieval stronghold, the Hatvan community too began constructing its buildings after a major spatial re-organisation

¹³ We employed the Harris matrix during the excavation: each archaeological feature was assigned a unique identification number (the associated layers or the closed features were given a feature number, while individual layers were marked with a layer number). Each feature was also given an IF number that described the feature's form. These were then illustrated as a matrix-like hierarchy that indicated their chronological position relative to each other as well as the relationship between them.

and that the three occupation areas marked by various cut features at the site (Middle Ages/late Árpadian Age; terminal Early Bronze Age–Middle Bronze Age; Late Copper Age) lay in roughly the same location, had a similar occupation intensity and had a more or less identical extent in the area investigated in Trench 3.

The layers and various features found underneath SE–23, which were first attested as soil marks in excavation level 9 represented the features of another, earlier period (Obj. 19, SE 56/57 IF, pit floor or post-hole; Obj. 20, SE 58/59 IF, pit; Obj. 21, SE 60/61 IF, pit): the high number of pottery fragments brought to light could be assigned to the classical Baden period (Fig. 3/2). These features lay deeper, on the lower half of a stepped terrace. Nevertheless, the upper part of their ashy fill still contained a number of Hatvan finds (e.g. Obj. 21), suggesting that the ashy-sooty and burnt fill layers can be associated with the hearths and the ash-pits of the oven of the Hatvan occupation. In contrast, two pits (Obj. 19 and 20) almost exclusively yielded Baden finds. Feature 21 cut Feature 20, as could be seen from the soil marks and during their excavation.

We documented fifteen excavation levels in Trench 3, distinguished according to the employed excavation method of tracing levels (Fig. 3/1). It seems likely that the hill side was terraced during the Late Copper Age Baden period, which was subsequently levelled in the Early Bronze Age by the Hatvan community settling here, which then constructed its open-air hearths and ovens in this area. The post-holes (Obj. 5–6 and 9–10) on the western side of these features had perhaps been associated with former houses or workshops, possibly with their walls.

Trench 4

The lowermost trench was opened to investigate the hill base area in the foreground of the stronghold. We uncovered several medieval features that probably represented the remnants of a timber-framed above-ground structure (Obj. 12–13, 15, 17). One post-hole (Obj. 17) cut a prehistoric pit. Only one part of the rather amorphous other pit (Obj. 16) containing both Hatvan and Baden finds fell into the trench. Its large size, slumping fill and amorphous form suggest that it had been a loam pit. The lower part of the fill, which differed from the upper one both in terms of its colour and texture, contained Baden finds, while the upper part yielded Hatvan finds, suggesting a similar use of the available space as in the case of the features uncovered in Trench 3.

Discussion

The features uncovered in the four trenches form well-definable units. The medieval features represent the defence works of the one-time stronghold: the ditches of the bailey and an assumed gate (Trench 3), the double defensive ditch in the castle's foreground and possibly the remains of a palisade (Trench 1). On the testimony of the fill layers, these lost their importance sometime in the fourteenth century, which fits in nicely with the historical record since we know that Charles Robert had the castle demolished at this time. The fragmentary finds tell a similar story (well-fired pots with collared rim, vessels decorated with burnished spiral motifs, finely tempered jugs fired to a white colour, particularly the pieces reflecting the period's most popular types such as the fragments of thin-walled white jugs and pots painted with red bands and dots). Comparable pottery finds dating from the late thirteenth and the fourteenth century are known from the neighbouring regions, mainly from Vác and County Pest¹⁴. The medieval settlement in the hill base area, whose presence was earlier indicated by Szilvia Guba's trial trenches, probably dates from the same period.

The prehistoric features uncovered in Trenches 3 and 4 attested to the presence of an extensive settlement occupied during both the Baden and the Hatvan period. The finds and the features indicate that the hillside was artificially terraced during the Late Copper Age and that the storage pits and other features were established in this area. These terraces were levelled during the Bronze Age – although natural erosion probably also played a role – and the community settling here then cut its own installations, such as the ovens, into this layer.

The occupation layers of possibly different cultures accumulated to a thickness of almost 2 m in Trench 3 (Fig. 3/3, 5). The fill layers dating from different periods and the outlines of the superimposed features of different cultures could not always be clearly distinguished, not least because of

¹⁴ cf., e.g., Mészáros 2016, 287–288; Rác 2019, 92–93.

later disturbances, which obviously poses difficulties in dating. Only after the initial assessment and inventorying of the finds did it become clear that a feature whose upper layer could be assigned to the Hatvan culture contained at least as many Baden finds in the lower layer, or *vice versa*: Hatvan finds were brought to light from the layers above the lower fill of a feature that could be associated with the Baden culture. No more than two prehistoric features could be assigned to a single period: specifically two pits (Obj. 6 and 9) of the Baden culture. Before drawing any hasty conclusions, a broader perspective definitely seems in order.

Pál Patay made similar observations on several sites in the region, for example at Ózd–Kőalj-tető, Salgótarján–Pécs-kő, Piliny–Vár-hegy and Sőreg–Vár-hegy¹⁵. Unfortunately, these are all old excavations that lack a proper field documentation or none was made and were excavated according to spade spits. This type of hilltop settlement with its tell-like occupation layers – differing markedly from the average Late Copper Age Baden site – and the barely visible natural humus levels separating the occupation layers led to a general scholarly consensus according to which the Ózd–Piliny group, one of the late groups of the Baden complex, had retreated to the mountain region of north-eastern Hungary where it survived as a relict and lived to see the arrival of the Bronze Age tell cultures (specifically of the Hatvan culture in this region) – moreover, this group acted as a substrate of the Bronze Age cultures or its population blended with latter¹⁶. The assumed survival of the Baden culture into the Bronze Age and the cultural impulses from its early cultures would have explained a settlement strategy and occupation pattern that has much in common with the Bronze Age tell cultures. In addition to the customary settlement features, the abundance of Baden pottery with an entirely differing ornamentation would have again bespoken the late date of the Ózd–Piliny group and its survival into the Bronze Age.

On the testimony of the initial assessment and inventorying of the finds, considerably more prehistoric periods and cultures could be identified at the site than we had initially assumed from the then available information. In addition to finds of the Zseliz culture, we also identified a significant Middle Copper Age occupation, even if it remains unclear for the time being whether the finds represent one or more Middle Copper Age cultures and which one(s) ((Bodrogkeresztúr or Hunyadi-halom). The site's Late Copper Age occupation was considerably more complex than what our previous knowledge suggested: in addition to the classical Baden (Ózd–Piliny variant), the find material included Kostolác-type finds too. Scanty finds of the Early Bronze Age Makó culture, a significant amount of Early and Middle Bronze Age Hatvan material equalling in number the Baden finds, and, although to a lesser extent, Late Bronze Age and Early Bronze Age cultures (Tumulus, Urnfield and Kyjatice) are represented in the find material.

Curiously enough, the archaeological finds have a much broader cultural and chronological range than the excavated settlement features, which could be assigned to three periods: the classical Baden period, the Hatvan period and the medieval period. There were no Neolithic or Middle Copper Age features in the investigated areas, and neither did we find Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age ones either. Nor was it possible to draw a finer chronological distinction between the Late Copper Age features and to identify Baden- and Kostolác-type sub-periods. This paradox should be a major caveat in the assessment of the site and its finds since there is a grave discrepancy between the typo-chronology based on the finds and the chronology based on the stratigraphy of the features.

Firstly, we should be more cautious regarding the existence of Late Copper Age hilltop settlements since the critical re-assessment of the finds from Salgótarján–Pécs-kő and the sites in the Ózd area indicated that the majority of the finds and features previously assigned to the Baden culture actually represented other periods. The attribution of a fluted pottery sherd to the Baden culture is often erroneous, given that fluting can be found among the decorative modes of Middle Copper Age (e.g. Bodrogkeresztúr and Hunyadi-halom) and Late Bronze Age cultures too (e.g. Tumulus and Urnfield¹⁷). Vessel fragments described as bearing a “rich array of applied and other ornamentation”, barbotine, “scoring with straws” and ladder motifs, the main rationale behind the attribution of the Ózd–Piliny group to the late Baden period, are not typical Baden ceramic traits: the former are more distinctive to later periods, while the latter is typical of the Hatvan culture, similarly to the miniature animal

¹⁵ Patay 1999, 50.

¹⁶ cf. Kalicz 1968, 133, 166–167, 172, 174; for a discussion of the purported Baden–Hatvan continuity, see Horváth 2019, Chapter 4.7.

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion, cf. Horváth 2018, 106–107, and Horváth *et al.* 2018, 22–23.

figurines and miniature clay axe that do not occur in the Baden culture¹⁸. The radiocarbon dates from northern Hungary have demonstrated that the Ózd–Piliny group or, better said, its variant, does not represent the latest Baden, but the general classical Baden period falling between 3350 and 2800 BC¹⁹.

Thus, while the classical Baden culture is attested in the mountain region, its presence was not as intense as previously believed, and neither is there any indication of a Baden period surviving into the Bronze Age. Rather than reflecting a surviving Baden, the Bronze Age layers, features and their finds typically represent Bronze Age Hatvan and even later cultures, whose finds were previously erroneously assigned to an Ózd–Piliny–Baden horizon. Thus, we can hardly speak of fortified hilltop settlements with tell-like occupation layers in the case of the Baden culture²⁰. We can speak of no more than a few Baden pits – which, however, are no different from the average Baden settlement, even if the Baden community constructed terraces on the hillside: a dispersed occupation pattern with a few pits, ovens and hearths, and an occupation layer made up of the debris of these features, similarly as on the culture's open, rural settlements²¹. The lack of clearly distinguishable occupation layers separated by naturally deposited soil layers dating from different periods, specifically from the Baden and Hatvan periods at Baglyas-kő, can be explained by that the space suitable for settlement was limited and the nature of the site – not being a level area – invariably led to spatial re-organisations during later periods before a new community's settlement and any building activity, whereby the natural soil layer(s) accumulating over previous occupation layers was destroyed or disturbed together with the underlying layers and their features, rather than by the site's continuous occupation. Sporadic occupation levels and their features were in all likelihood completely destroyed in the process (such as traces of the Neolithic, the Middle Copper Age and even the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age settlement, at least compared to the more intense medieval occupation with its defence works).

The critical re-assessment of the finds from the Pécs-kő site indicated a much more diverse occupation history – with significant Late Bronze Age layers – than what could be gleaned from József Korek and Pál Patay's field documentation²².

It must also be borne in mind that different cultures had entirely different spatial needs and diverse approaches to using space, as is evident from a comparison of a Neolithic or Copper Age settlement section characterised by pits and a Bronze Age occupation with houses and workshops or an Iron Age or medieval settlement with defence works. It follows from the above that the lack of soil layers separating occupation layers does not necessarily imply that two superimposed occupation layers from different periods followed each other without a break and that the remnants of the earlier community were absorbed by the later population.

The available space for settlement was restricted and possible also underwent changes from one period to the next: the transformations over the past 250 years are best illustrated by historic maps from 1784 (First Military Ordnance Survey). The maps of the First and Third Military Ordnance Surveys as well as the nineteenth-century cadastre maps show roughly similar environmental conditions, with more or less identical hydrological conditions and dry land (Fig. 1/3–4). In contrast, the relevant section of the map of the Second Military Ordnance Survey (1869) shows that the area towards Irmeghegy-oldal to the north of Baglyas-kő was covered with water, except for the basalt peak itself (Fig 1/5). This might have been induced by natural causes (a wetter climatic period with higher precipitation, *cf.* Réthly 1998, 528–532) since industrial activity and the transformation of the environment change in its wake had not begun at the time. The map captures a moment in time which could have been the case during other periods too from prehistory onward, when only the rock and the more gently sloping north-eastern hillside were suitable for human settlement because all other areas were permanently or intermittently submerged. It is thus understandable why that slope was utilised for settlement and occupied repeatedly after the necessary spatial re-ordering during successive periods.

¹⁸ Horváth 2018, 39–40, 95.

¹⁹ Horváth 2018, 70–78.

²⁰ In fact, most of the fortified sites believed to have been occupied during the Late Copper Age are problematic: in contrast to earlier reports, some sites lack defence works from this period, while on others, the defensive installations date from a later period: *cf.* Horváth 2018, 112.

²¹ *cf.* the Balatonőszöd–Temetői-dűlő site: Horváth 2014, Section 3.1.4.

²² Horváth 2018, 147–148, Pls. 39–40.

Conclusion

A systematic excavation has not been undertaken on a hilltop settlement site in north-eastern Hungary occupied during the Copper Age-Bronze Age since the investigation conducted at Salgótarján–Pécs-kő by Pál Patay and József Korek in 1960.

Although the excavation and the associated non-invasive surveys were completed in spring 2019 alongside the conservation and inventorying of the finds as stipulated by the grant conditions, our understanding of the site remains tentative until the full assessment of the excavation and the finds. Nevertheless, we can highlight several advances and changes in our perception even at this stage of the site's assessment compared to what we previously knew, and our preliminary findings will no doubt be refined, depending on whether we will have the opportunity to continue the assessment of the site and its finds at greater length. We considered the publication of the preliminary results important because the gap and discontinuity between the Copper Age and the Bronze Age that was previously conjectured and convincingly demonstrated on other sites (critical re-assessment of find assemblages, radiocarbon chronology) could be proven through an excavation, and, even more importantly, specifically in the mountain region of north-eastern Hungary, on a site lying a few kilometres away from the iconic Ózd–Kőalja and Salgótarján–Pécs-kő sites. One of our goals was to share with colleagues what we had found at the Baglyas-kő site because we believe that comparable observations will be made on other similar sites in north-eastern Hungary and south-western Slovakia if an appropriate excavation technique is employed, while the find horizons distinguished at the Baglyas-kő site will no doubt contribute to recognising similar patterns on other sites and to the correct cultural attribution of sites and their phenomena, avoiding the previous pitfalls of drawing erroneous conclusions.

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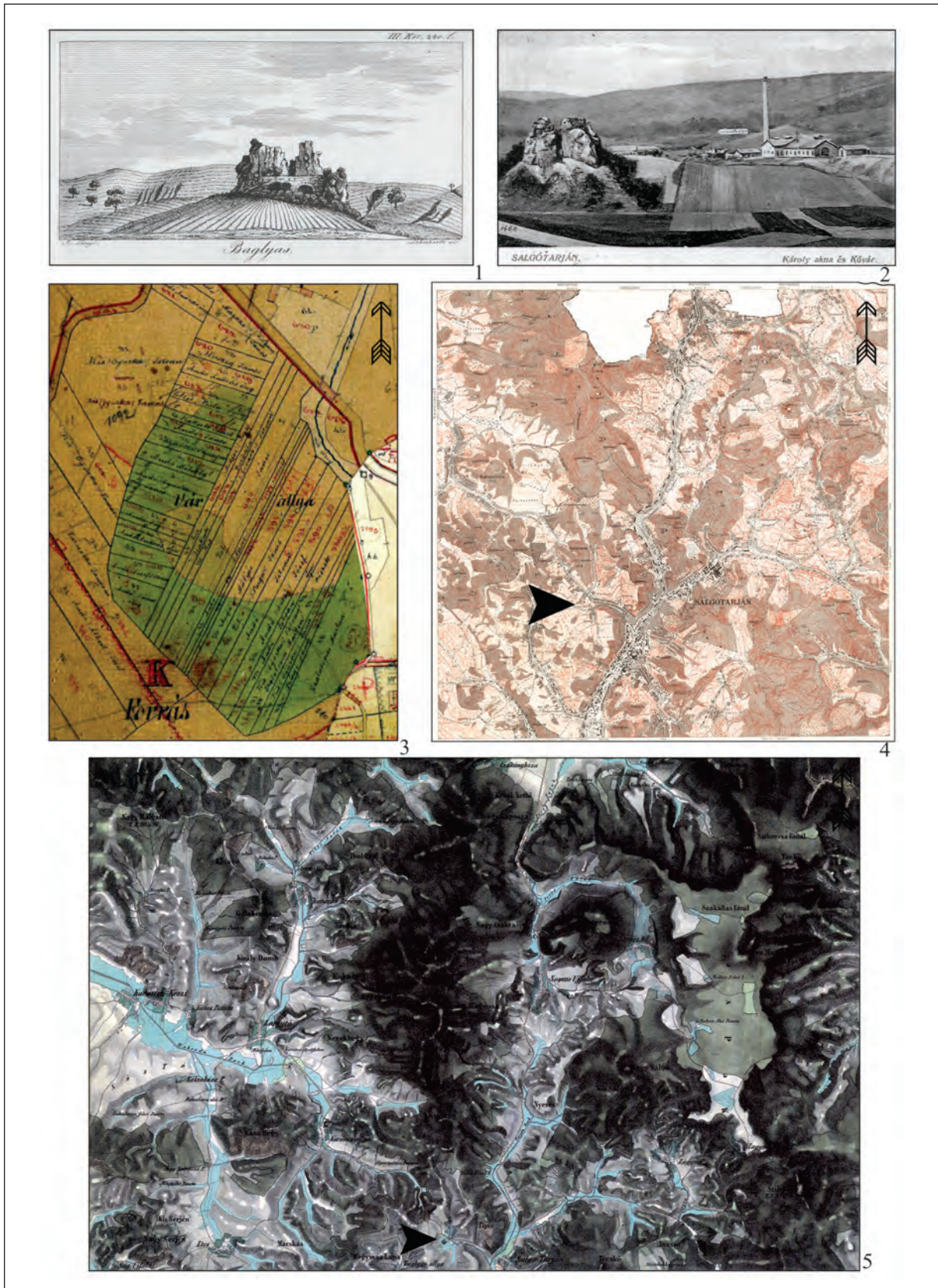


Fig. 1. 1. Antal Mocsáry's depiction of Baglyas-kő Castle based on Sámuel Lehnhardt's copper engraving, in *Mocsáry 1826*, Vol. III: p. 240; 2. Postcard with a view of the Károly Shaft and the stone castle at Salgótarján, and the strip plots in the Baglyas-kő area between 1910–1913, with the ridge of the Meszes Mountains in the background; 3. Cadastral map of Baglyas-kő showing the narrow strip plots <https://mapire.eu/hu/map/cadastral/?layers=3%2C4&bbox=2202285.3890899247%2C6124402.620518815%2C2204358.74348216%2C6125119.217658989>; 4. Baglyas-kő on sheet 207–41 of the 25,000 military topography map, 1968; 5. Baglyas-kő on sheet 35–44 of the map of the Second Military Ordnance Survey, 1869.

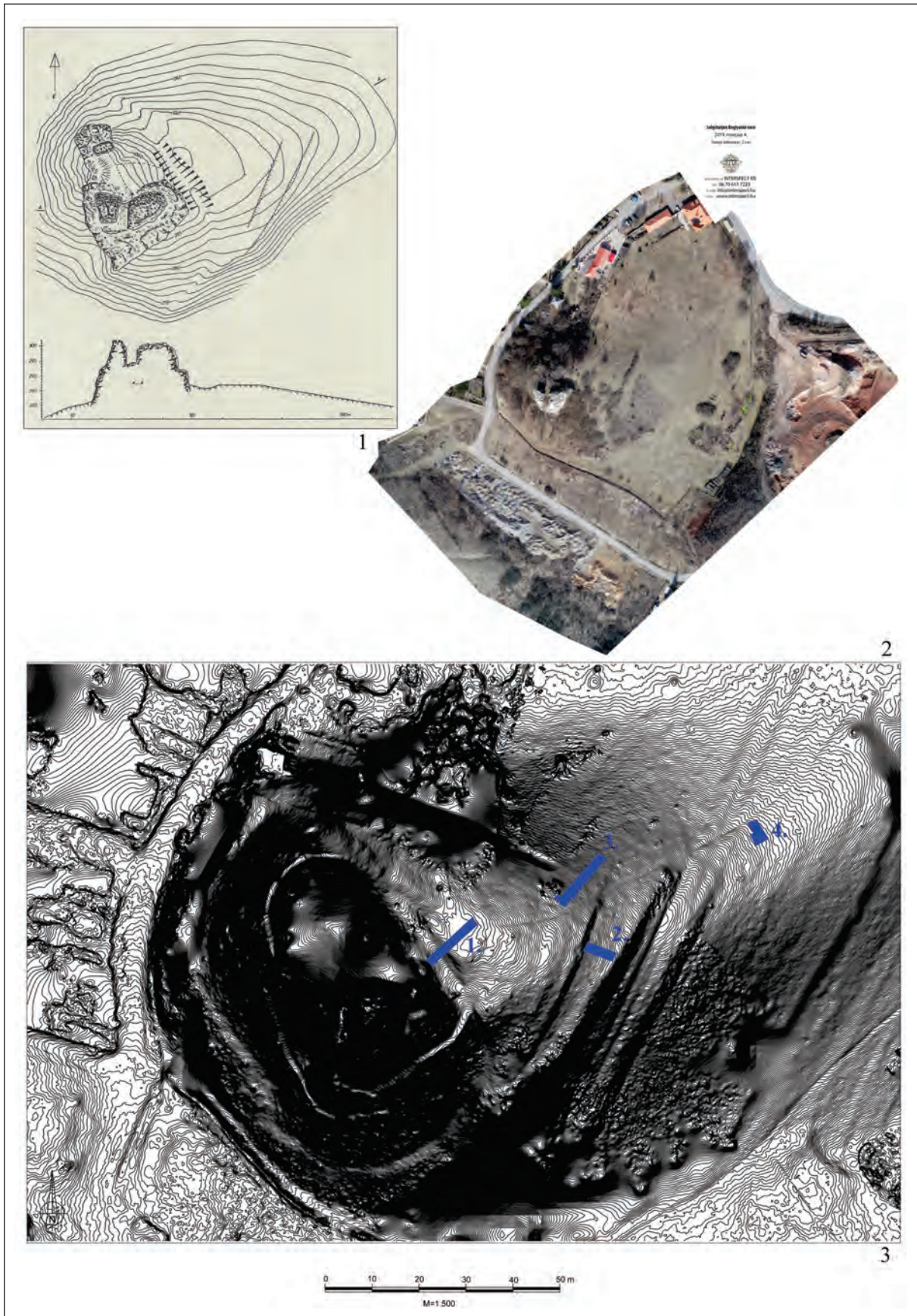


Fig. 2. 1. The first survey of the castle, in *Nováki, Sándorfi 1991*; 2. Orthophoto of Baglyas-kő, based on the survey by Interspect Kft., directed by Gábor Bakó; Contour map of Baglyas-kő showing the excavation trenches, based on the survey drawing by Interspect Kft., prepared by ArchaeoJedi Kft. and A. B. Szilasi.

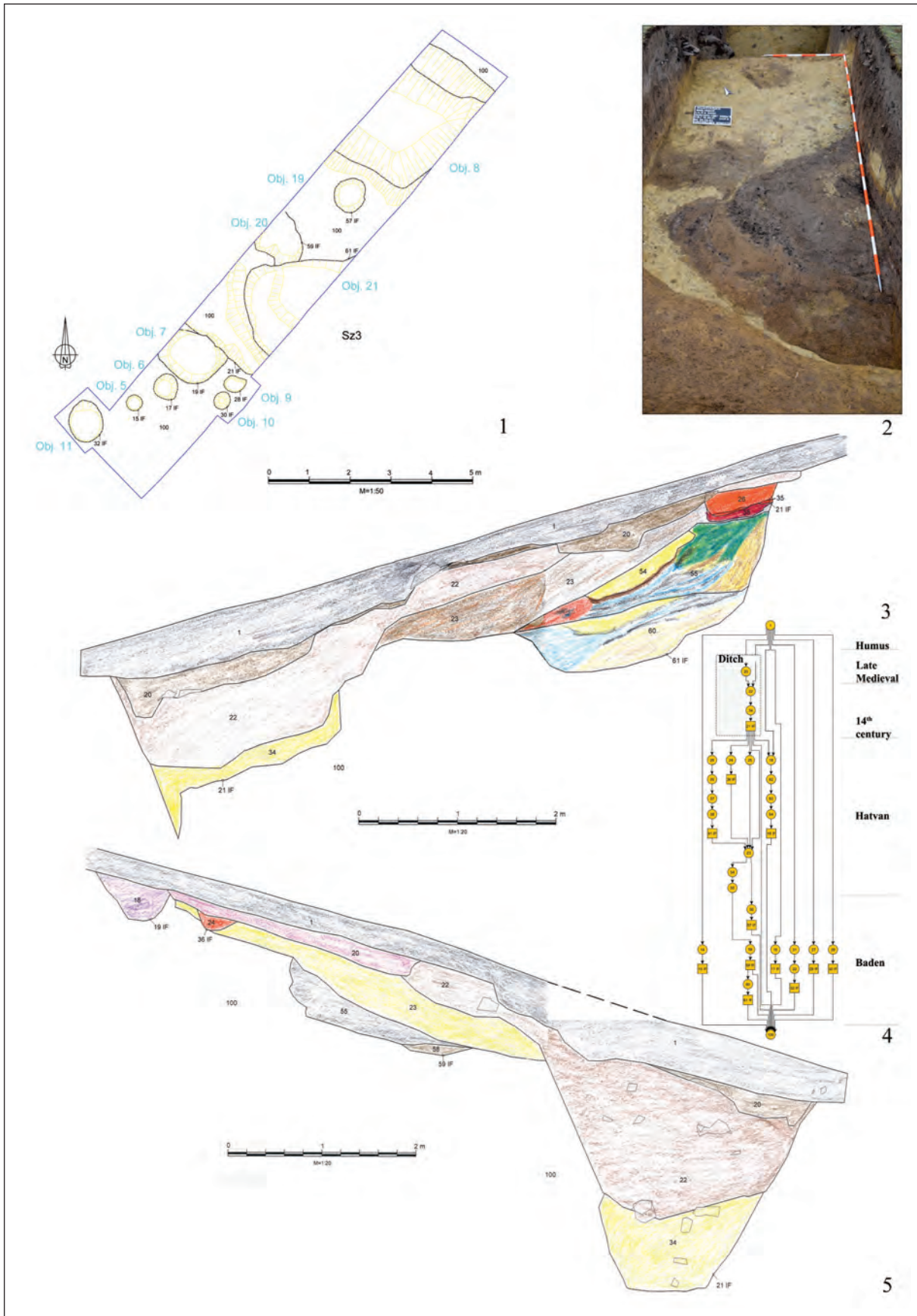


Fig. 3. 1. Plan of Level Dof. 15, the lowermost level, in Trench 3, made by ArchaeoJedi Kft. and A. B. Szilasi; 2. Soil marks of Features 19, 20 and 21 in excavation level Dof. 9, made by ArchaeoJedi Kft.; 3. Section 7 of Trench 3, eastern view; 4. Matrix of Trench 3; 4. Section 8 of Trench 3, western view, made by ArchaeoJedi Kft. and Tünde Horváth.

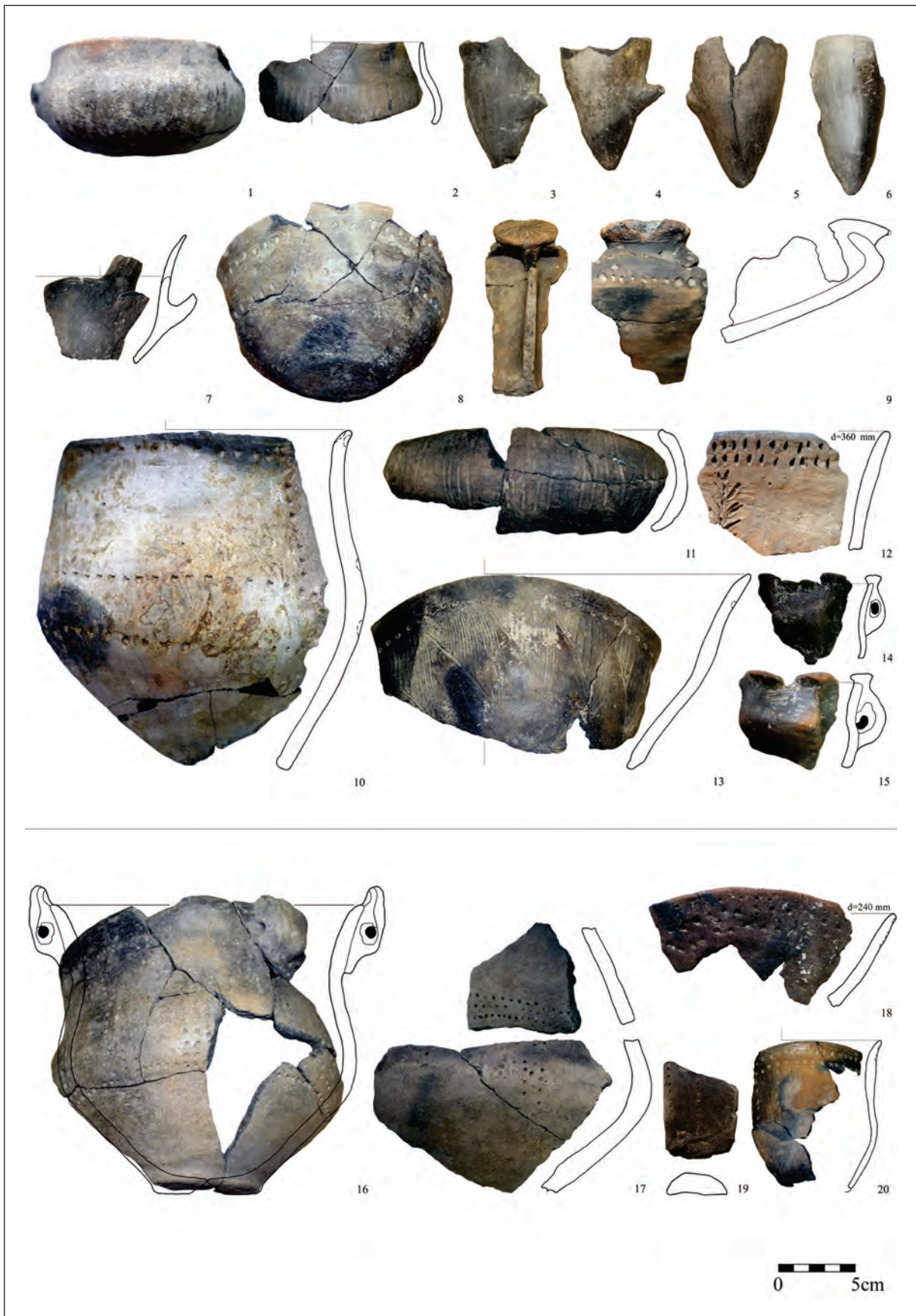


Fig. 4. Selection of classical Baden and Kostolác-type pottery from the site.

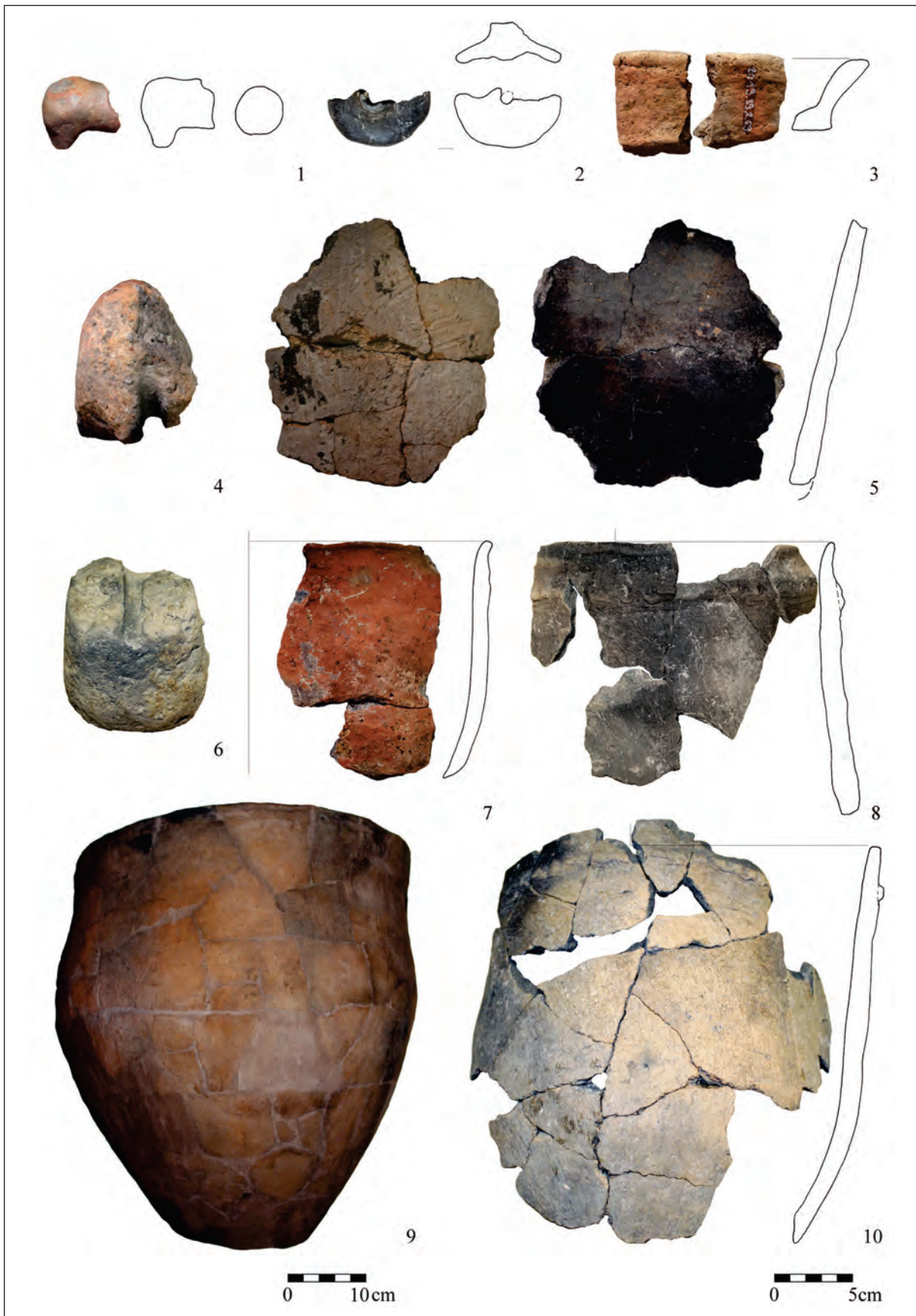


Fig. 5. Selection of Hatvan pottery from the site.

Abbreviations

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Cracow.
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
ActaMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
AnArchRessoviensia	Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia, Rzeszów.
AAS at CEU	Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU, Budapest.
Apulum	Acta Musei Apulensis – Apulum, Alba-Iulia.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia, Székesfehérvár.
Antaeus	Antaeus, Budapest.
Arrabona	Arrabona, Győr.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală, Cluj-Napoca, Brăila, Reșița.
ArchBaltica	Archaeologia Baltica, Vilnius.
Arch.Inf	Archäologische Informationen.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, Sibiu.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
Banatica	Banatica, Reșița.
BBMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve, Szekszárd.
BUFM	Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiei Naționale a Monumentelor, ansambluri situri istorice. București.
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungaricae, Budapest.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, Comisia Națională de Arheologie, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CMA	Complexul Muzeal Arad.
Dolgozatok	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum érem- és régiségtárából, Cluj.
Dolg.	Dolgozatok a Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből, Szeged.
Dolg. ÚS	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, Új Sorozat. Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
HOMÉ	A Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
JAM	Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza.
JPMÉ	Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve.
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz.
KRRMK	Kaposvári Rippl Rónai Múzeum Közleményei, Kaposvár.
LMI	Lista monumentelor istorice, updated in 2015.
MittArchInst	Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
MOL	Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari Részvénytársaság / Hungarian Oil and Gas Public Limited Company
Marisia	Marisia, Târgu Mureș.
NyJAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
Przegląd Archeologiczny	Przegląd Archeologiczny, Wrocław.
Rad	Jósa András Museum, Archaeological Archive
RégFüz	Régészeti Füzetek, Budapest.

RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon/Archaeological Investigations in Hungary, Budapest.
RAJ Arad	Repertoriul Arheologic al Mureşului Inferior. Judeţul Arad. Timişoara 1999.
RAN	Repertoriul Arheologic Naţional.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIV(A)	Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie, Bucureşti.
SGB	Studii de Geografie a Banatului, Timişoara.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timişoara.
Slavia Antiqua	Slavia Antiqua, Poznań.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra.
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei, Kaposvár.
SovArh	Sovetskaja Arheologija, Moskva.
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.
StudiaUBB Historia	Studia UBB Historia, Cluj-Napoca.
SzKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács Múzeum Évkönyve, Pécs.
Századok	Századok, Budapest.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Sebeş.
Tibiscum S. N.	Tibiscum S. N., Caransebeş.
TransRev	Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca.
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum, Zalaegerszeg.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica. Arad.
Živa Antika	Živa Antika, Skopje.